

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-18 are pending herein. Claims 1-18 have been amended for clarification purposes and to correct matters of form only. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added.

1. Applicants hereby affirm the provisional election to prosecute claims 1-3 in the present application. However, Applicants assert that claim 1 is generic to all species and, therefore, claims 4-18 have been maintained.

2. The Examiner's indication that references listed in the application does not constitute a proper information disclosure statement is noted. However, Applicants wish to call the Examiner's attention to the Information Disclosure Statement filed with the application on September 26, 2001, which lists the references cited in the application. Therefore, consideration and entry of these references is respectfully requested.

3. The objection to the drawing is noted but deemed moot in view of the amendment made to Fig. 2. As shown on the amended drawing replacement sheet attached hereto, the legend --PRIOR ART-- has been added to Fig. 2. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the objection to the drawing be reconsidered and withdrawn.

4. The Examiner's objection to the Title of the invention is noted. The Title has been amended accordingly. Applicants respectfully request the objection to the Title be reconsidered and withdrawn.

5. The objection to claims 1 and 2 is noted but deemed moot in view of the amendment to claims 1 and 2. Applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 1 and 2 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

6. Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Shimogawa et al. To the extent that this rejection might be applied against amended claim 1, it is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a method of fabricating a piezoelectric/electrostrictive device comprising the steps of preparing a ceramic green laminate comprising at least one ceramic green sheet constituting a thin plate and at least one ceramic green sheet having at least one hole formed thereon, sintering the ceramic green laminate to produce a ceramic laminate, forming the piezoelectric/electrostrictive element by a film formation method on the outer surface of the thin plate portion of the ceramic laminate, and cutting *through the entire thickness of the ceramic laminate* with said piezoelectric/electrostrictive element formed thereon.

Shimogawa teaches forming grooves in a ceramic substrate, which absorb tensile forces between individual piezoelectric transducers as disclosed in column 7, lines 10-13. Applicants respectfully submit that Shimogawa does not teach or suggest cutting *through the entire thickness of the laminate* to realize multiple devices from one manufacturing process. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and all claims that depend therefrom define patentable subject matter over Shimogawa and thus are in condition for allowance.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is requested to issue a Notice of Allowance as soon as possible.

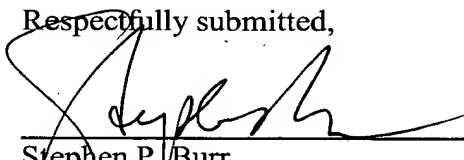
If the Examiner believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, the Examiner is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

February 18, 2004

Date

Respectfully submitted,



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